United Nations A/56/378–S/2001/890

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 September 2001
English
Original: French

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 75 (a)
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 14 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held from 13 to 17 August 2001 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (see annex).

The meeting made important recommendations and agreed on a programme of work for the Committee for the period 2001-2002; these require the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I should be very grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 75 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Atoki **Ileka**
Permanent Representative
Ambassador

01-54577 (E) 031001 041001

Annex to the letter dated 14 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

(Kinshasa, 13-17 August 2001)

Introduction

The sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Kinshasa from 13 to 17 August 2001.

The following member States took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Rwanda did not attend.

Representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also participated in the work.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by Mr. Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- A statement by H.E. Mr. Nelson Cosme, Deputy-Secretary-General of ECCAS;
- The opening address by H.E. Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, presided over the closing ceremony.

Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau by its Chairman.
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.
5. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa.
6. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
   (a) Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
   (b) Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa;
   (c) Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa;
   (d) Establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.
7. Briefing on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.
8. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa.
9. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa.

10. Organization of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

11. Consideration of the draft resolution on the activities of the Advisory Committee.

12. Programme of work for the period 2001-2002.

13. Date of the next meeting.

14. Other matters.

15. Adoption of the report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting.

Conduct of work

I. Election of the Bureau

The Committee elected a Bureau composed as follows: Chairman: Democratic Republic of the Congo; First Vice-Chairman: Central African Republic; Second Vice-Chairman: Equatorial Guinea; Rapporteur: Republic of the Congo.

II. Report of the outgoing Bureau

The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau presented by H.E. Mr. Sévérin Ntahomvukiye, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, Chairman of the Bureau.

The Committee welcomed the energetic and effective way in which the Bureau had discharged the mandates entrusted to it by the fourteenth ministerial meeting with regard, in particular, to the raising of awareness among the countries of the subregion concerning the importance of signing and/or ratifying the Non-Aggression Pact, the Mutual Assistance Pact and the Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX); the organization of the fifteenth and sixteenth ministerial meetings; the preparations for the conference on the protection of women and children in armed conflict and the steps taken with a view to the effective launching of COPAX; and the establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

III. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

Angola

The Committee learned with consternation of the recent tragedy that had struck the Angolan people following UNITA's attack on a passenger train, in which hundreds of people were killed.

It associated itself with the mourning of the Angolan people in their time of sorrow and extended to them its heartfelt condolences.

The Committee expressed concern at the continuing conflict in Angola especially owing to the repeated attacks by the União Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA) and their tragic consequences for peace, security, stability, and development in Angola and for the well-being of its peoples.

It expressed support for the efforts of the Government of Angola to restore peace, security and stability throughout the territory and to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

It called on the international community to assist the displaced persons.

It invited UNITA to renounce the pursuit of war and instead promote national reconciliation and peace for the benefit of all Angolans under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol.

The Committee called on all Central African countries to comply strictly with the sanctions imposed on UNITA by the United Nations Security Council.

Burundi

The Committee expressed deep concern at the heightened insecurity in Burundi and, in particular, at the continuation and escalation of the violence being perpetrated against civilian populations in that country by armed groups based in some neighbouring countries.

It welcomed the recent signing of an agreement on transitional leadership which gives grounds for real hope about the development of the situation in Burundi.

It expressed its support for the efforts of the Burundian Government and all Burundians to bring about a lasting peace in their country.

The Committee paid tribute to the efforts being made by the Facilitator, H.E. Mr. Nelson Mandela, and the heads of State of some members of the Advisory Committee to bring peace to Burundi, and it encouraged them to continue these efforts in the context of the Arusha process.

It invited the countries of the Central African subregion, particularly those of the Great Lakes region, to help the Burundians restore peace through dialogue and reconciliation and to refrain from providing any direct or indirect assistance to the rebels.

The Committee addressed a solemn appeal to all armed movements to turn in their weapons immediately and to join in the Arusha process and engage in negotiations for a total and permanent ceasefire.

It urged all Burundian parties to endeavour to promote national reconciliation and restoration of peace in Burundi, in order to facilitate full implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community to provide substantial support for the peace efforts in Burundi, especially through more effective and committed cooperation.

Cameroon

The Committee paid tribute to the consolidation of a climate of peace and stability in Cameroon.

It welcomed the Cameroonian Government's pursuit of a policy of dialogue in the context of the establishment of a consensus-based democracy that will promote the country's harmonious development.

The Committee welcomed the Cameroonian Government's efforts to continue its campaign against crime and organized crime and to consolidate the gains in respect of human rights.

It was informed of the progress of the investigations of the commission of inquiry set up by the Cameroonian Government to investigate the case of the alleged disappearance of nine persons in Bépanda and of the disciplinary and judicial proceedings instituted against the accused.

It welcomed the Government of Cameroon's policy of good-neighbourliness towards the other countries of the subregion.

The Committee again expressed deep concern at the information provided by the delegation of Cameroon on the persistent attempts at infiltration and repeated acts of provocation by Nigerian forces on the Bakassi peninsula and other border points and again called on the two parties to refrain from any action that could heighten tensions pending the decision of the International Court of Justice, which Cameroon had seized of the matter.

The Committee, in addition to reiterating its appeal to the international community and friendly countries to assist in maintaining the peace between Cameroon and Nigeria while awaiting the verdict of the International Court of Justice, requested the Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a rapid conclusion of the proceedings pending before it.

The Committee again urged Nigeria to comply strictly with the interim measures of protection laid down by the Court in its ruling of 15 March 1996 and called upon the two parties to refrain from taking any action that could create difficulties for the application of the final judgement of the Court.

Congo

The Committee welcomed the positive developments in the situation in the Congo, marked inter alia by a tremendous improvement in the overall peace and security situation, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the continued collection of military weapons, demobilization and reintegration of former militia members and the resumption of economic and commercial activities in all the smaller towns from which the population had previously fled.

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Congolese Government to promote national reconciliation in that country and, in particular, the holding in Brazzaville, from March to April 2001, of the all-embracing national dialogue in which all elements of national life participated.

It expressed its appreciation for the smooth handling of the administrative assessment and invited all political actors to set about calmly to resume the ongoing democratic process.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the situation created in several regions of the country due to the huge influx of refugees from neighbouring countries and the adverse consequences this has had at the security, economic, social and environmental level. It urgently appealed to the international community to provide substantial and swift support to the Congo in order to help it deal with that situation.

Gabon

The Committee noted with appreciation the climate of peace and political stability in the Gabonese Republic.

It welcomed the holding in Libreville, from 25 July to 1 August 2001, of the tripartite meeting among Gabon, the Congo and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which led, inter alia, to voluntary repatriation of a first wave of Congolese refugees from Gabon and encouraged the parties involved to continue their efforts to complete the matter.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Equatorial Guinea.

It noted with satisfaction the continuation of the democratic process in Equatorial Guinea.

Central African Republic

The Committee expressed grave concern at recent events in the Central African Republic and, in particular, at the attempted coup of last May, which claimed many lives and caused significant displacement of the population.

It took note of the reports concerning the presence in the Central African Republic of many refugees from neighbouring countries and of the security problems that this creates for the host country.

It welcomed the return to calm in that country and noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the Central African Government to fight insecurity and to continue the process of restructuring the armed forces and disarmament.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee expressed grave concern at the continued infringements of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It commended the efforts made by President Joseph Kabila to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in order to safeguard respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee asked the parties which have not yet done so to complete their withdrawal to the new defensive positions in accordance with the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans for disengagement and redeployment.

The Committee asked all countries whose troops are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make appropriate necessary arrangements for a prompt, complete and orderly withdrawal in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, so as to restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that country.

It asked all parties involved to make all necessary arrangements with a view to achieving the prompt demilitarization of the town of Kisangani in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

It urgently appealed to the Security Council to move ahead as soon as possible with the implementation of phase 3 of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee expressed its grave concern at the continued systematic plundering and unlawful exploitation of natural resources and other riches in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and demanded the immediate cessation of these practices.

It expressed deep concern at the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee welcomed the prospect of the impending start of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue and urgently appealed to all

Congolese parties to cooperate fully with the Facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and to participate actively in that dialogue in a spirit of tolerance and compromise.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community to continue its support for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide substantial assistance to the people affected by the war.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Sao Tome and Principe and the strengthening of the democratic process as reflected in the recent presidential elections which were won by H.E. Mr. Fradrique Melo Bandeira de Menezes.

It noted with satisfaction that the recent signing of an agreement for the exploitation of the country's oil resources may help the economy to pick up.

Chad

The Committee took note of the information provided by the delegation of Chad regarding the smooth operation of the presidential elections in Chad.

It welcomed the re-election of H.E. Mr. Idriss Deby as President of Chad and his determination to make national reconciliation and the prospect of peaceful change in Chad through consolidation of the democratic process, poverty eradication and development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation the central theme of his new mandate.

It noted with satisfaction the Chadian security forces' successes in their campaign against armed "roadblockers" and organized crime in the cities, together with the positive results of the Government's efforts to ease tensions between livestock owners and farmers.

It expressed concern at the continuing attacks by the armed opposition and encouraged the Chadian authorities to pursue their policy of dialogue and openness towards the opposition in order to bring about national reconciliation among all Chadians.

It called on all parties in Chad to respond positively to this spirit of openness and to give priority attention to reconciliation so as to protect the best interests of the Chadian people.

IV. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the intensification of actions and initiatives taken by the member countries within the framework of cooperation in security matters, aimed, in particular, at lessening tensions, combating insecurity in the border areas and facilitating exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the cross-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended continued cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee particularly welcomed:

- The cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola in the training of members of the Congolese national police;
- The organization of joint patrols at the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, which has made it possible to restore navigation on the Congo River and to provide security to the riparian population;
- The visit to Brazzaville by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, which enabled him to discuss security issues in the subregion with his Congolese counterparts;
- The tripartite consultations among Angola, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The training of members of the police forces of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad at the national police academy in Yaoundé;
- The cooperation between the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, which resulted, in particular, in the repatriation of refugees from the Congo;
- The meeting between the defence and security authorities of Burundi and their counterparts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- The success achieved through cooperation between the police forces of Cameroon and the Central African Republic, particularly in combating cross-border vehicle thefts;
- The cooperation between Cameroon and the Central African Republic in the training of officers of the armed forces of the Central African Republic, the police, the gendarmerie and customs officials;
- The consultations held between the administrative and military authorities of the Central African Republic and their counterparts in Cameroon to dispel misunderstandings and tensions among the peoples of the border areas;
- The consultations held between the authorities of Cameroon and Chad, which resulted in the voluntary repatriation of more than 500 Chadian refugees;
- The joint operations carried out by Chad and Cameroon to recover the wreckage of a Cameroonian military aircraft that had crashed in Chadian territory;
- The signing of agreements between Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon and between Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea on the delimitation of maritime boundaries;
- The organization of joint border patrols by the security forces of the Central African countries;
- The coordination meetings between the administrative and military authorities of the border areas to dispel tensions among the population and build confidence;
- The summit meetings on security questions held by the Central African countries at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

The Committee expressed its deep concern with regard to the upsurge in organized crime and insecurity in the countries of the subregion, particularly the development of the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the intensification of information exchange and the organization of large-scale joint operations to combat this scourge. It recommended that a high-level meeting should be held on the question, aimed, in particular, at setting up a suitable legal framework for cooperation in the matter.

It stressed the need for closer cooperation among the security services of the various countries with a view to combating the cross-border trade in stolen vehicles.

Recalling the importance to the subregion's peace and security of the protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the Mutual Assistance Pact concluded in Malabo in February 2000 among the countries of Central Africa, the Committee recommended that the Bureau should draw the attention of those countries which had not already done so to the need to sign and/or ratify those instruments.

Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee appealed to those countries that had not yet signed the agreement on criminal police cooperation, adopted in April 1999 at the meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs in Yaoundé, to take all necessary steps to expedite the signing of this text and to guarantee its full effectiveness.

V. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee

A. Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)

The Committee welcomed the information provided by the Deputy Secretary-General ECCAS concerning the status of ratification of the instruments governing COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact, and particularly the ratification of these two instruments by Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. He asked those countries to transmit the relevant instruments of ratification to the depositary country, Gabon, and urged countries that had not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify those legal instruments before the next ministerial meeting.

With respect to the early warning mechanism, the Committee was also informed of the completion of the refurbishing of the building made available to ECCAS by the Gabonese Government.

It noted with satisfaction that the Gabonese Government had established a budget line to cover some of the operating costs of the mechanism.

It welcomed the contacts currently under way between ECCAS and the Gabonese Government with a view to the forthcoming operationalization of the early warning mechanism.

B. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

The Committee reiterated its interest in organizing joint military exercises.

It repeated its recommendation that a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the Central African countries should be convened in order to review the Biyongho-98 exercise, revise its costs downwards and determine the division of contributions among the various countries.

The Committee noted the offer made by the Government of the Gabonese Republic to host the meeting in October 2001, on a date to be determined.

It asked the Gabonese Government to provide the Committee secretariat with a proposed budget for the organization of the meeting.

A mandate was given to the Bureau to take all the necessary steps, in conjunction with the Committee secretariat, ECCAS and the Gabonese Government, for the organization of the meeting.

C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

The Committee noted with satisfaction that work had begun on the construction of the building that was to house the subregional parliament.

The Committee was informed of the continuing contacts between the ECCAS secretariat and the various member countries concerning the setting up of the network of parliamentarians established in Malabo on 24 June 2000.

It also noted with satisfaction information on the adoption of instruments governing the organization and functioning of the network of parliamentarians.

A mandate was given to the Bureau of the Committee to continue to follow developments and to report on them at the next meeting.

Members were reminded that the protocol setting up the network of parliamentarians had been adopted in November 2000.

D. Establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The Committee congratulated the Cameroonian Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ECCAS secretariat on their combined efforts for the effective establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

It took note of information on the continued activities of the Centre under the supervision of the project coordinator appointed to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Committee welcomed the high-level contacts maintained by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Cameroon with a view to making further progress in this area.

It was informed that a meeting of experts to review the draft documents governing the organization and functioning of the Centre had been held in Libreville from 2 to 5 July 2001. It considered and took note of the report of that meeting, and congratulated the experts on the quality of their work.

VI. Briefing on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Committee noted with interest the briefing given by Mr. Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, expert from the Committee secretariat, on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001.

It welcomed the information on the conduct of the Conference and on the content of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the end of the Conference.

It also welcomed the incorporation in the Programme of Action of many of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena in October 1999, and of the concerns set forth in the Bamako Declaration regarding the common African position on the proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

Nonetheless, it regretted that not all the concerns expressed by African delegations at the Conference had been taken into account in the Programme of Action, and hoped that future reviews of those issues would result in further progress.

The Committee urged the member countries to take the necessary steps to implement the Programme of Action in their respective territories and to devise projects that could benefit from the international assistance provided for in the Programme of Action to deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which particularly affected the Central African subregion.

VII. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa

After reviewing the recommendations formulated by the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena from 25 to 27 October 1999, the Committee noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the countries of the subregion to implement them.

In particular, it welcomed the operations to disarm persons illegally possessing firearms, the operations to collect weapons in the hands of the population, particularly in countries emerging from conflict, the demobilization and disarmament of former combatants, the organization of campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of firearms, the establishment in the various member countries of appropriate legislation governing the trade and ownership of firearms and the activities of private security firms, the strengthening of border controls, the organization of operations for the collection and destruction of weapons and measures taken to combat organized crime and roadblocks.

The Committee also welcomed the organization in Brazzaville, on 14 April 2001, of a public ceremony for the destruction of weapons of war, known as the "flame of peace", and encouraged the other countries of the subregion dealing with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to hold such ceremonies, in view of their significant psychological impact.

The Committee recommended that the member countries should intensify their efforts to implement the recommendations of the Conference and more generally to step up the struggle against the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, bearing in mind the dangers posed by this scourge to the peace, security, stability and development of the subregion.

VIII. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa

After reviewing the recommendations formulated by the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa, held in Bujumbura from 14 to 16 August 2000, the Committee welcomed the efforts made by the countries of the subregion to implement them.

The Committee also noted with appreciation the establishment in several member countries of institutional structures responsible for the management of issues relating to refugees and the efforts made by the authorities of the countries of asylum to promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees in collaboration with the refugees' countries of origin and the competent international agencies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It expressed concern about the indication, by several delegations, that the inflow of refugees from

neighbouring countries was jeopardizing their countries' security and stability.

It asked all the countries of the subregion to comply with international norms governing the acceptance and management of refugees, particularly the obligation to disarm them and to settle them at a reasonable distance from the border of their country of origin.

It encouraged all the countries of the subregion to continue their efforts to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons in their territories while respecting the relevant international norms.

The Committee made an urgent appeal to the international community and, in particular, the United Nations specialized agencies to provide greater support to the many refugees and displaced persons in Central Africa, and to the countries of asylum.

IX. Organization of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts

The Committee noted with interest the explanations provided by Ms. Pamela Maponga, Secretary of the Committee, on the status of preparations for the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

It decided to hold the Conference in the first half of November 2001, on a date to be determined, and welcomed the reaffirmation, by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of its willingness to host the meeting in Kinshasa.

A mandate was given to the Bureau, the secretariat and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make all the necessary arrangements for the organization of the Conference.

X. Consideration of the draft resolution on the activities of the Advisory Committee

The Committee considered and adopted a draft resolution on its activities, which will be submitted at the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It recommended that all the member countries should contact their Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York to urge them to support actively the adoption of the draft resolution.

XI. Programme of work of the Committee for 2001-2002

- Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts (Kinshasa, November 2001, date to be determined)
- Meeting of chiefs of staff to review the Biyongho-98 exercise (Libreville, October 2001, date to be determined)
- High-level seminar on the organization and operation of the early warning mechanism (Yaoundé, date to be determined)
- Seventeenth ministerial meeting of the Committee (Kinshasa, March 2002, dates to be determined)
- Eighteenth ministerial meeting of the Committee (Bangui, dates to be determined)
- Meeting of experts on the establishment of a women's network on efforts towards peace and security in Central Africa (Malabo, date to be determined)

XII. Date of the next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its seventeenth ministerial meeting in Kinshasa in the second half of March 2002, on dates to be determined.

XIII. Other matters

In order to take a fresh approach to the conduct of its meetings, the Committee decided that the review of Central Africa's geopolitical situation and security should henceforth be prepared by the Committee's secretariat so that the members could react to and discuss it even more candidly.

The Committee urged member States to make regular contributions to the trust fund intended to finance its activities.

Lastly, the participants welcomed the favourable climate that had prevailed throughout their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, H.E. Major-General Joseph Kabila, and to the Congolese Government and people for the warm welcome and fraternal attentions paid to them during their stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Kinshasa, 17 August 2001